

The
Romaunt
of the
Rose

That night and day from hir she stal
Botouns and roses over al.
To Resoun than prayeth Chastitee,
Whom Venus flemed over the see,
That she hir doughter wolde hir lene,
To kepe the roser fresh and grene.
Anoon Resoun to Chastitee
Is fully assented that it be,
And grauntid hir, at hir request,
That Shame, bicause she is honest,
Shal keper of the roser be.
And thus to kepe it ther were three,
That noon shulde hardy be ne bold,
Were he yong, or were he old,
Ageyn hir wille away to bere
Botouns ne roses, that ther were.
I had wel sped, had I not been
Awayted with these three, and seen
for Bialacoil, that was so fair,
So gracious and debonair,
Quitte him to me ful curteisly,
And, me to plesse, bad that I
Shuld drawe me to the botoun nere;
Prese in, to touche the rosere
Which bar the roses, he yaf me leve;
This graunt ne might but litel greve.
And for he saw it lyked me,
Right nygh the botoun pullede he
A leef al grene, and yaf me that,
The which ful nygh the botoun sat;
I made me of that leef ful queynt.
And whan I felte I was aqueynt
With Bialacoil, and so prive,
I wende al at my wille had be.

THAN wex I hardy for to tel
To Bialacoil how me bifel
Of Love, that took and wounded me.
And seide: Sir, so mote I thee,
I may no joye have in no wyse,
Apon no syde, but it ryse;
for sithe, if I shal not feyne,
In herte I have had so gret payne,
So gret annoy, and such affray,
That I ne wot what I shal say;
I drede your wrath to disserve.
Lever me were, that knyves kerve
My body shulde in pecis smalle,
Than in any wyse it shulde falle
That ye wratthed shulde been with me.
Sey boldely thy wille, quod he,
I nil be wroth, if that I may,
for nought that thou shalt to me say.
Thanne seide I: Sir, not you displese
To knowen of my greet unese,
In which only Love hath me brought;
for paynes greet, disese and thought,
fro day to day he doth me drye;
Supposeth not, sir, that I lye.
In me fyve woundes dide he make,
The sore of whiche shal never stake
But ye the botoun graunte me,
Which is most passaunt of beautee,
My lyf, my deth, and my martyre,
And tresour that I most dysyre.

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THAN Bialacoil, affrayed all,
Seyde: Sir, it may not fall;
That ye desire, it may not ryse.
What? wolde ye shende me in this wyse?
A mochel foole than I were,
If I suffrid you away to bere
The fresh botoun, so fair of sight,
for it were neither skile ne right
Of the roser ye broke the rind,
Or take the rose afrom his kind;
Ye ar not courteys to aske it.
Lat it stil on the roser sit,
And growe til it amended be,
And parfitly come to beaute.
I nolde not that it pulled wer
fro the roser that it ber,
To me it is so leef and dere.

WITH that sterte out anoon Daungere,
Out of the place where he was hid,
His malice in his chere was kid;
ful greet he was, and blak of hewe,
Sturdy and hidous, whoso him knewe;
Like sharp urchouns his here was growe,
His eyes rede as the fire glow;
His nose frounced ful kirked stood,
He com criand as he were wood,
And seide: Bialacoil, tel me why
Thou bringest hider so boldly
him that so nygh is the roser?
Thou worchist in a wrong maner;
He thenkith to dishonour thee,
Thou art wel worthy to have maugree
To late him of the roser wit;
Who serveth a feloun is yvel quit.
Thou woldist have doon greet bountee,
And he with shame wolde quyte thee,
flee hennes, felowe! I rede thee go!
It wanteth litel I wol thee slo;
for Bialacoil ne knew thee nought,
Whan thee to serve he sette his thought;
for thou wolt shame him, if thou might,
Bothe ageyn resoun and right.
I wol no more in thee affye,
That comest so slyghly for tespye;
for it preveth wonder wel,
Thy slight and tresoun every del.

DURST no more ther make abode,
For the cherl, he was so wode;
So gan he threten and manace,
And thurgh the haye he did me chace.
for feer of him I tremblid and quook,
So cherlishly his heed he shook;
And seide, if eft he might me take,
I shulde not from his hondis scape.

THAN Bialacoil is fled and mate,
And I al sole, disconsolate,
Was left aloon in payne and thought;
for shame, to deth I was nygh brought.
Than thought I on myn high foly,
How that my body, utterly,
Was yve to payne and to martyre;
And therto hadde I so gret yre,
That I ne durst the hayes passe;
Ther was non hope, ther was no grace.



I trowe never man wiste of payne,
But he were laced in Loves cheyne;
Neno man wot, and sooth it is,
But if he love, what anger is.
Love holdith his heest to me right wele,
Whan payne he seide I shulde fele.
Non herte may thenke, ne tunge seyne,
A quarter of my wo and payne.
I might not with the anger laste;
Myn herte in poynt was for to braste,
Whan I thought on the rose, that so
Was through Daungere cast me froo.

A LONG whyl stood I in that
state,
Til that me saugh so mad and
mate
The lady of the highe ward,
Which from hir tour lokid
thiderward.
Resoun men clepe that lady, **Resoun**
Which from hir tour deliverly
Come down to me withouten more.
But she was neither yong, ne hore,
Ne high ne low, ne fat ne lene,
But best, as it were in a mene.
hir eyen two were cleer and light
As any candel that brenneth bright;

And on hir heed she hadde a crown.
Hir semede wel an high persoun;
for rounde environ, hir crownet
Was ful of riche stonis fret.
Hir goodly semblaunt, by devys,
I trowe were maad in paradys;
Nature had never such a grace,
To forge a werk of such compace.
for certeyn, but the letter lye,
God himsilf, that is so high,
Made hir aftir his image,
And yaf hir sith sich avauntage,
That she hath might and seignorye
To kepe men from al folye;
Whoso wole trowe hir lore,
Ne may offenden nevermore.

AND whyl I stood thus derk and pale,
Resoun bigan to me hir tale;
She seide: Al hayl, my swete frend!
foly and childhood wol thee shend,
Which thee have put in greet affray;
Thou hast bought dere the tyme of May,
That made thyn herte mery to be.
In yvel tyme thou wentist to see
The gardin, wherof Ydilnesse
Bar the keye, and was maistresse
Whan thou yedest in the daunce